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Human resources management

Human resources management

Views of the staff representatives of the United Nations Secretariat

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General transmits herewith for consideration by the Fifth Committee a document submitted by the staff unions and associations of the United Nations Secretariat. The present document has been submitted pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 2 (a) of resolution 35/213 of 17 December 1980, whereby the General Assembly reiterated its readiness "to receive and consider fully the views of the staff as set out by a single recognized representative of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat in a document submitted through the Secretary-General under the agenda item entitled "Human resources management".

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I. Introduction

1. If the reform of the United Nations is to be successful, then it is incumbent upon all parties to make a serious attempt to rid the Organization of the culture of privilege that has evolved over the past fifty years and which has enabled the existence of two sets of rules — one for those with authority and one for those without.

2. The staff of the United Nations are anxious to transform the Organization into a caring employer with strong mandates and staff who strive for excellence to implement them. But we also wish to ensure that we are not transferring more authority to programme managers who are not yet capable of handling it. Ensuring that additional authority does not become abuse of power will take a concerted effort of all parties to ensure a behavioural change that is fundamental to the success of reform.

3. The staff are committed to that transformation. We have suffered for many years under an inadequate system. Many of the proposals now being put forward by the Task Force on Human Resources have been historical concerns of staff representatives for many years.

4. It is our hope that, not only will you allow us to share our views with you, our employers, but also that you will put aside our traditional role as staff representatives and see us for exactly what we are, major stakeholders in a reform process that will shape our future.

II. Security and independence of the international civil service

5. On United Nations Staff Day in September of this year, the Secretary-General spoke at length about security of the staff. He stated that "staff security begins with security of person, the ability to go about your work free from threats, harassment and violence". The international civil service cannot be independent without job security and the security to perform their functions for the benefit of the Organization alone.

6. Some Member States might perceive that career appointments have led to underperformance in some cases. However, this is not the case. All staff, at the time of their initial recruitment, passed careful scrutiny of their qualifications and/or an intensive competitive examination. Therefore, we can be assured that we have been recruiting the best and the brightest. The problems that have led to underperformance lie more in the lack of nurturing of the talents of these individuals and the resulting lack of motivation for them to take pride in their work and achievements. This situation is now being addressed by the Secretary-General and we are hopeful that it will be resolved by the reform.

7. Without career appointments, staff members will be sent by their Governments with agendas other than the interests of the Organization. The manner in which programmes are implemented will be severely affected by the wishes of the Governments of the programme managers. The overwhelming majority of staff have struggled to deliver their programmes in a timely manner and with the excellence that has been the hallmark of the United Nations for more than fifty years. The Secretary-General has pledged to make comprehensive changes in the performance appraisal system (PAS) and to address underperformance. But those 5 per cent or less who will be addressed by such a change in the system should not be the overriding concern.

8. Individuals who leave their home countries and family ties, travel to distant lands and often work under conditions of extreme hardship, deserve the security of a career commitment with the United Nations. The international civil service was never meant to

be a consulting firm where individuals can be flexibly disposed of. The international civil service is a calling that we as staff undertake at times with great difficulty. The type of devotion that staff demonstrate for the principles of the United Nations should be reciprocated and rewarded.

9. The staff has been extremely concerned about reports showing, for the first time, a higher number of civilian casualties than military casualties. We are well aware that staff work in many high risk areas of the world and we deeply regret the continued loss of life among our colleagues. There have been many improvements in the security arrangements since the inception of field missions, but there is still room for significant improvement.

10. The staff representatives applaud the issuance of the new handbook by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, entitled *Security in the Field*. It is a practical guide for everyday life in the field and will be an enormous help to our staff serving all over the world. The staff is also pleased that the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel is very close to ratification. To date, 21 countries have become signatories to the Convention. Upon the signature of one more country, the Convention will enter into force. Staff representatives are proud of the role that we have played in highlighting the need to ratify the Convention. Over the past year, a number of special events and press conferences have been organized around this theme.

11. In February 1998, the Standing Committee on the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service, under the auspices of the United Nations Staff Union, sponsored the first Summit on International Security at Headquarters in New York. The Summit was sponsored by the Secretary-General and conducted with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator. At the conclusion of the meeting, a Statement of Principles on International Security of Staff was adopted and forwarded to the Secretary-General. The statement is enclosed as annex III to the present report.

12. The staff representatives thank the Secretary-General for providing such a comprehensive list of staff members who were detained, killed or died in the field over the last reporting period in the report on respect for privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations: safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel (A/53/501). It is sad to note that there continues to be no new information about certain staff members. In particular, the staff has organized events this year in honour of Alec Collett of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), who has been detained in Lebanon by militias or unknown elements since 25 March 1985, and Vincent Cochetel, representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia (Russian Federation), who was abducted on 29 January 1998.

13. It would be helpful if the Secretary-General, whenever travelling to areas of the world where staff are detained or missing, would ensure that special efforts are made to discuss this matter with the appropriate government officials with a view to resolving some of the many cases listed in annex II to his above-mentioned report.

14. As different nations of the world undergo civil strife and reorganization, there have recently been a number of incidents where the contractual status of local staff was threatened because of decisions taken by Governments. While the staff representatives recognize the sovereign right of Governments to make policies for their nationals, it is important that the United Nations, to the largest extent possible, try to negotiate headquarters agreements that will afford the best possible protection for local staff. At the same time, the staff agrees that, once an individual accepts to work for the United Nations, the spirit of internationalism must be primary. Nationalistic and patriotic allegiances must be relegated to a minor position

to ensure that there is no conflict with the staff member's major responsibility — to serve the international community in an independent manner.

15. Staff representatives strongly believe that the administrative threats to our colleagues in the field must also be addressed. Many staff are serving on 300 series contracts of limited duration, designed to cover very specific assignments in the field. If these contracts are expanded to wider use, it will mean inferior conditions of service, benefits and entitlements, which may lead to exploitation of the very individuals who put their lives on the line every day. Surely a humanitarian organization striving to be among the best employers of the world cannot permit this to happen.

16. The staff has taken positive steps to alleviate some of the suffering to the immediate families of staff who lose their lives in the service of the Organization. A scholarship fund, under the auspices of the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA), was established a few years ago. Owing to a lack of funding, the fund has not become fully operational. However, with recent fundraising activities, there is now sufficient seed money to launch the fund. Voluntary contributions will be needed to sustain the scholarship fund into the future and it is hoped that staff, organizations and Member States will be generous in that regard.

17. It is clear that security of staff has become such an urgent issue that all organizations, agencies and programmes must combine their interests, ideas and resources to ensure that their staff are fully protected in the field. The staff representatives fully support the proposal of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) that all organizations develop and institute separate lines in their respective budgets for security. We are also happy to see the establishment of the Trust Fund for Security of United Nations system staff in the field, established by the Secretary-General at the request of ACC and administered by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator. There is a tremendous need for security and stress management training, provision of stress counselling, provision of short-term security personnel in crisis areas and the development of computer software to enhance security management that it is hoped that all governments will follow the lead of Norway and make substantial contributions to the Trust Fund.

18. Stress management must become a priority as each year more and more staff members are threatened, robbed, beaten, held hostage, stabbed, shot, raped or murdered. These traumatic experiences affect not only the victims, but also the colleagues who are sometimes witnesses to these events. Stress counsellors should be available at every mission area to help the staff cope with these types of traumatic incidents and to cope, in general, with life in the field.

19. The staff representatives congratulate the Office of Human Resources Management for organizing a working group on staff humanitarian affairs to develop a comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with the death of staff both at Headquarters and in the field. There are a number of offices in the United Nations that are committed to turning the United Nations into a caring employer.

III. Reform of the United Nations

20. The staff representatives applaud and share the vision of the Secretary-General for a United Nations that can respond efficiently and effectively to the challenges of the next century through a fundamental change in its behavioural culture. The staff will make every attempt to support the achievement of that vision and we look forward to an expanded role as we now undertake the process of proposing concrete action to make the vision a reality.

However, thus far, there are very few concrete proposals that, in our view, will lead to meaningful and lasting change.

21. In his statement introducing the paper on reform to the staff of the United Nations, the Secretary-General spoke of his desire for a system encompassing elements of equality and transparency. Such a change requires a complete overhaul of the current mindset. Although this is not a simple task, it is well worth the investment of time if we are to bring about lasting change.

22. From the beginning of the process, staff representatives have held the view that the burden of change has been held in the hands of too few people. The Organization needs to undergo a process of resocialization — engaging employees as meaningful contributors from the very top level on down through the ranks. It is, therefore, heartening that the Secretary-General has acknowledged that real dialogue must take place at every level rather than enforcing mandates from above.

23. Specialists in change management believe that organizations, like human beings, have vital signs that reveal a great deal about their overall health and adaptability. First, employees must believe they can affect organizational performance and that they have the power to make things happen. Second, individuals must identify with the organization as a whole, not merely with their narrow profession or unit. Third, members of the organization should confront and solve conflict, not merely smooth problems over. Fourth, the way an organization deals with new ideas and continuous learning is an important element of its culture. To date, only the continuous learning aspect has been fully incorporated into the United Nations principles of reform.

24. It is natural for any large organization, as it matures, to lose its vigour in these areas, particularly when there are complicating factors such as a lack of appropriate funding or support from superiors. This scenario leads many managers to abandon organizational goals and to claim private patches of turf where they can exercise unrestrained authority. When this occurs, the initial dynamism of the organization slips into a succession of routine tasks that lead to mediocrity.

25. The *Harvard Business Review* reports that of all the Fortune 100 companies that conducted reform exercises in 1980 through 1995, only 30 per cent were successful. This is a clear signal to the Organization that enduring reform is so difficult to achieve that, even when tackled by the most experienced companies in the private sector, it is not likely to succeed.

26. The common thread in all of the successful exercises was the concept of transforming rather than reforming and the complete involvement of all levels of staff. We must transform the United Nations by permanently rekindling individual creativity and responsibility; constantly attuning and adapting both internal and external processes, and, most importantly, changing human behaviour on the job. Without these types of changes, the reform will not take hold and the Organization's viability and relevance in the next millennium will be jeopardized.

27. Staff in New York have been invited to participate in the working groups of the Task Force on Human Resources Management. However, there is a need to establish mechanisms to ensure that information is shared among all staff at all duty stations. At the 22nd session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee, staff proposed that information from the working groups of the Task Force should be distributed to all staff unions and associations of the global Secretariat. Each staff union/association would appoint a contact person for liaison concerning communications from the Office of Human Resources Management. An information campaign should also take place to ensure that staff at duty

stations away from Headquarters received adequate information about the reform process. It is our understanding that plans for the latter are under way.

28. The United Nations Staff Union was honoured to be invited by the Task Force to make a presentation and to have an exchange of views in March 1998. The major points presented by the Staff Union at that meeting are contained in annex II to the present document. During that exchange, members of the Task Force indicated that the reform would fail if it was undertaken by the Office of Human Resources Management alone without appropriate input from other departments and without the input of the staff. These views were in line with the concerns that have been expressed by the staff since the beginning of the process.

IV. Delegation of authority/accountability

29. In its resolution 51/226 of 3 April 1997, the General Assembly welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to streamline administrative procedures and eliminate duplication in relation to human resources management through delegation of authority to programme managers. It requested him to ensure, **before delegating such authority** (emphasis added), that well-designed mechanisms of accountability, including the necessary internal monitoring and control procedures, as well as training, were put in place.

30. It should be noted that the General Assembly endorsed the establishment of a system of accountability and responsibility in 1993. Five years later, the issues remain largely visionary without concrete measures to achieve the goal of true accountability of managers. The report of the Secretary-General on human resources management (A/53/342) indicates that: performance indicators as a measure of quality control will only be established by the years 2000-2001; the mechanism to ensure accountability for effective management of the personnel and financial resources allocated to managers has never been developed; the performance appraisal system is still in its infancy and cannot be fully utilized as a tool for accountability; and only the first phase of people management training has been completed.

31. The report further describes the lines of reporting from the lowest levels in each department through department heads to the Secretary-General. However, it falls short of describing the essential mechanism that is required — a mechanism to analyse the quality of decisions and the action to be taken when those decisions are faulty and/or improperly motivated.

32. Extensive discussions were held at the twenty-second session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee in May 1998 on this issue. Staff representatives advocated following the mandates of the General Assembly in resolution 51/226 and developing concrete steps to ensure accountability including appropriate sanctions for misuse of human and financial resources. Management favoured a softer approach and believed that training was the essential element needed before any sanctions could be considered. With 70 per cent of the Organization's resources spent on staff costs in the regular budget and taking into account the financial crisis faced by the Organization, ensuring accountability for the management of those resources is critical for the current reform exercise.

33. A chart of accountability vis-à-vis parameters/objectives was drawn up based on the discussions for further refinement in the working groups of the Task Force on Human Resources Management. That chart is contained in annex I to the present report.

34. The staff representatives welcomed the General Assembly's mandate in paragraph 1, section II of resolution 51/226, which recognized the role of the Office of Human Resources Management as the primary representative of the Secretary-General in establishing the

policies and guidelines and strongly requested the Secretary-General to maintain its central policy authority. It is our belief that, particularly when new responsibilities are being delegated to individual department heads, it is imperative to have a strong central authority that will ensure the interpretation of the rules and regulations and enforce their application to ensure equality for all staff. Otherwise, there is no way to ensure that all staff will receive equal treatment under the Staff Rules and Regulations. The Office of Human Resources Management is advocating the transformation of that Office from a central authority to a centralized support department, which would provide guidelines, training and oversight without any power to enforce the Staff Rules and Regulations.

35. The report refers to one concrete accountability measure — a management review panel — composed of senior managers, that would review specific cases of non-compliance and make recommendations to the Secretary-General as to the appropriate sanctions to be imposed. There are a number of concerns on how such a mechanism would operate. The Secretary-General envisions this panel as one completely composed of senior managers. No body of people can sit in judgement of themselves and senior managers of the Organization are no exception. Consequently, the staff question the effectiveness of such a mechanism whereby managers would review the actions of other managers and suggest sanctions.

36. At the same Staff-Management Coordination Committee meeting it was recommended that, within the context of accountability, managers should be instructed to take the necessary measures, including initiating an investigation when appropriate, in case(s) of reported misbehaviour by a staff member they supervise, whether such action by the staff member concerned took place in the performance of her or his duties or outside the workplace in cases which may have brought the Organization's reputation into question.

37. It was agreed that a review of Joint Appeals Board or United Nations Administrative Tribunal cases of the past three years would be undertaken in terms of the responsibility and accountability of the manager(s) concerned with a view to taking appropriate corrective action.

38. Management participants at the Staff-Management Coordination Committee felt that additional discussion was warranted and suggested that the staff's proposals be considered by the working groups on reform. It was confirmed that there would be no further delegation of authority before concrete accountability measures were operational. It is expected that, as requested by Member States at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General will ensure, before delegating such authority, that well-designed mechanisms of accountability, including the necessary internal monitoring and control procedures, as well as training, are put in place.

39. The Performance Appraisal System (PAS), which was intended to be one of the major inputs in a system of accountability, has not met its objectives. Owing to the complexity of the system and the heavy time commitment required for its annual cycle, there is a general lack of compliance with the requirements of the system. Very little consultation between staff and management, intended to be the cornerstone of the system, has materialized. Yet some staff have already been held accountable under the process through non-renewal of their fixed-term contracts.

V. Detailed proposals for the implementation of a dual-track system of career and non-career appointments

40. The validity of permanent contracts is being debated extensively, as it has been in the past. It shall be recalled that the issue of permanent international civil servant was recognized by the Preparatory Commission in London in 1945 when it concluded that members of the Secretariat staff could not be expected to fully subordinate the special interests of their countries to the international interest if they are merely detached temporarily from national administrations and dependent upon them for their future. Permanent contracts, therefore, became the cornerstone of an independent, impartial international civil service, for the service of humanity. They ensure that, if termination of staff is necessary, it is for just cause and does not imply that they did not make the decisions that their national Governments pressured them to make. Permanent contracts are essential and should be restored to a greater majority balance if the independence of the international civil service is to be maintained and protected.

41. It is again important to keep in mind the Secretary-General's statement on Staff Day 1998, in which he described staff security in the broadest sense and the link between staff security and human security. In his statement, the Secretary-General noted that staff security also means job security. Job security is more than the fact of having a job , it is also a matter of what staff feel to be possible in that job.

42. The staff representatives agree wholeheartedly with the Secretary-General and are concerned by the fact that, currently, there are more resignations than retirements and that two thirds of those resignations are occurring at the P-2 and P-3 levels.

43. Fixed-term appointments stimulate a number of problems in many respects. Staff on fixed-term contracts are asked to perform work outside of their job descriptions and sometimes extraneous to the work of the Organization. They are not able to obtain loans from banks or purchase homes owing to job insecurity. They are constantly reminded that unless they do what they are told, their contracts will not be renewed. They are expected to work long hours and weekends without any compensation or rest. If they take leave for illness or family emergencies it is held against them at the time they are evaluated for new contracts. And, ultimately, if their contracts are not renewed, even after five to ten years of service, they receive no indemnity from the Organization and they have no entitlement to any national unemployment scheme. Furthermore, most are expatriate staff, who must leave the country for an uncertain future in their homeland.

44. When the Organization refers to itself as a good employer and develops policies for a "work-life agenda", it is difficult to then reconcile the realities of life as a United Nations employee. The image and the vitality of the Organization are at stake if we do not find ways to ensure job security for the United Nations "most valuable resources".

VI. Simplification and streamlining of all personnel rules and procedures

45. The Secretary-General is expediting compliance with the request of the General Assembly, in paragraph 7 of section II of resolution 51/226, for the simplification and streamlining of all personnel rules and procedures in order to make them transparent and easier to apply.

46. The staff representatives welcome any attempt to make the personnel rules easier to apply and understand. In particular, we welcome the abolition of personnel directives that were never widely circulated among the staff yet contained important information that was applied by human resources managers in relation to the Staff Rules and Regulations. All rules should be accessible to all staff members. However, it is important to ensure that simplification does not eliminate any of the proper safeguards that are in place for the protection of staff rights and assurance of due process.

47. Towards this end, we would encourage the administration to conduct an information campaign to provide all staff members with up-to-date copies of the Staff Rules and Regulations and also to provide them with a handbook containing the frequently used administrative instructions and their interpretations. Simplified draft rules should be distributed to staff representatives for comments together with the current text. In this way, offices throughout the global Secretariat can see exactly what is being simplified to ensure that rights of staff do not disappear in the process.

VII. Term limits for staff representation

48. In paragraph 12 of section II of its resolution 51/226, the General Assembly recognized that staff representatives were entitled to an opportunity for career advancement, decided that the period of their continuous release should not exceed four years and also decided to limit such release to elected staff representatives only, on either a full-time or a part-time basis. The interpretation of this mandate has been provided in the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General on human resources management. Staff representatives are taking the appropriate steps to ensure compliance with the mandate of the General Assembly, as interpreted. In view of the fact that the decision is being applied prospectively from 3 April 1997, future rounds of elections will be adjusted according to this mandate.

49. The staff representatives fully appreciate the concern of the General Assembly for their career development prospects. However, we would like to bring a few important facts to the attention of the Assembly for consideration.

50. Staff unions are an integral part of an organization's system of accountability since they provide valuable checks and balances. The General Assembly, in paragraph 8, section II, of resolution 51/226, reaffirmed the need to strengthen the staff-management dialogue in the United Nations and in all its funds and programmes. The staff representatives are, therefore, fully aware of the importance the Assembly places on strong staff-management consultation.

51. By limiting the ability of staff unions and the staff at large to fully utilize representatives with the widest knowledge, experience and leadership abilities, the system of checks and balances will be substantially weakened.

VIII. Staff-management consultative mechanisms

52. The Staff-Management Coordination Committee (SMCC) has continued to meet on an annual basis. In view of the importance of this global consultative body, it was decided at the twenty-first session of SMCC in 1997, that the Coordination Committee would be the primary body for staff-management discussions on the human resources management reform of the United Nations.

53. The twenty-second session of SMCC recommended that a special session be convened in the fall of 1998, prior to the introduction of the Secretary-General's report on reform to the General Assembly. This would have provided all duty stations of the global secretariat with the opportunity to continue the detailed dialogue on reform and, perhaps, to arrive at basic agreements on an approach to a variety of issues. Owing to lack of funding, the Secretary-General was unable to authorize the special session.

54. Management has informed staff that there might be a possibility of conducting a retreat in the near future for further discussion on reform issues. The staff representatives have proposed that, rather than engage in informal dialogue, an arrangement be found where working groups and retreats would be conducted under the auspices of the Coordination Committee. In that manner, there would be a formal record of discussions and any consensus reached on issues could be reflected and formally ratified at the annual meeting.

55. Strong and productive staff-management relations require sufficient funding. SMCC should have an expanded role over the next five years to ensure close consultation and cooperation on human resources management reform issues. Therefore, it would be advantageous to hold two sessions per year over that time-frame. It would be helpful if the General Assembly could recommend that the Secretary-General ensure, in the forthcoming biennial budget, adequate resources for the global SMCC mechanism to permit special sessions and working groups.

56. It would also be important for SMCC to adopt its agreements and recommendations before the conclusion of the session, in order to minimize conflicts during the adoption of the full report by correspondence.

IX. Staff-management relations: consultation and dialogue

57. At the local level, the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) at Headquarters continued to meet on a regular basis. The Under-Secretary-General for Management has recently agreed to participate in meetings of JAC when there are issues that require his attention.

58. Until the early 1990s, staff representatives received the staffing tables for their respective departments. At the present time, staff representatives and the President of the Union may look at the staffing tables in the executive offices and in the Office of the Head of Administration, respectively. However, there are so many changes to the staffing tables on a weekly basis that it is impossible for staff representatives to follow the changes and ask the appropriate questions to protect staff interests unless they receive copies that they can review carefully, and there is great concern about the limited access they now have to these basic documents. Staff representatives cannot properly perform their functions under chapter VIII of the Staff Rules and Regulations without the ability to carefully review and compare changing versions of the staffing tables.

59. Managerial prerogative is a phrase being widely used in the Secretariat to exclude staff and their elected representatives from participating in major staff welfare issues. The role of the staff representatives to discuss issues like recruitment, placement and promotion and renewal of contracts has been questioned by several departments. The Office of Human Resources Management has suggested that staff representatives are attempting to co-manage the Organization.

60. Staff representatives have no desire to co-manage the Organization. However, the interpretation of consultation is an issue that has been often debated but remains without a concrete definition. Staff representatives realize that they cannot always get whatever they

ask for. They also fully understand that consultation is not a right to veto or approve specific decisions of the Secretary-General. However, informing the staff of decisions that have gone through a lengthy process of development dialogue and evaluation at all other levels cannot be construed as consultation.

61. Ideally, staff representatives in each department should be involved in the dialogue that affects changes at the programme level. At the central level, the Staff Committee would expect to be involved in discussions on policy changes at a level when their inputs can still be useful. It is disconcerting to be presented with a completed policy document which will be issued in two weeks' time and to be asked for comments at that point.

62. Staff representatives seek meaningful consultations where their ideas are considered and they are given reasons if their suggestions are rejected. In the private sector, some companies on the verge of bankruptcy learned this valuable lesson. Several American automobile manufacturers were able to reverse their negative trends and even to capture larger shares of the international markets once they took the advice of workers on the production line concerning their operations.

63. Those who do the work should have input into developing the work process. That is not co-management; that is sound management.

X. Proposals on the introduction of a probationary period for successful candidates in the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories

64. The staff representatives note, with great concern, the proposal to introduce a probationary period for all staff at the entry level of the Professional category. The Secretary-General, in his report, has indicated that this would be useful to ensure equal treatment of all entrants. However, due consideration may not have been given to the fact that the entrants from the national competitive examination and the G-to-P examination do not share equal status.

65. In order to properly assess the situation, the origin of the G-to-P examination must be recalled. Prior to 1979, staff from the General Service category were promoted to the junior professional level (P-1/P-2) as part of the normal placement and promotion process. Such promotion was part of the career development system. The G-to-P examination was introduced as a way to provide a fair and competitive system for promotion to the P-1/P-2 levels. Probationary appointments, at the present time, are offered for competitive **recruitment** examinations (emphasis added). The G-to-P examination is not a recruitment examination, it is a promotion process. Setting a probationary period on promotions would be incompatible with the current system of promotions under relevant administrative instructions.

66. The staff representatives respectfully request that the members of the General Assembly give serious consideration to the ramifications of enforcing a probationary period for senior staff who have been serving the Organization for many years. Such a plan would completely demoralize the General Service staff and the Organization would surely lose a huge pool of talent since qualified staff would seek employment in other organizations and the private sector where their university training would be considered an asset.

67. The staff representatives realize the General Assembly is making every effort to align the entry level competitive examinations. It should then be noted that the examinations are only being aligned with regard to eligibility requirements. The national competitive examination has a roster system which the United Nations administration has consistently rejected for successful G-to-P candidates. Also, the mandates of the General Assembly call for every effort to be made to place successful candidates from the national competitive examinations within one year, subject to availability of posts. There are no special considerations for successful candidates from the G-to-P examination.

XI. Career development policies (including placement and promotion issues)

68. The staff representatives have noted recent efforts to identify the core competencies required of all staff and managers to serve as a basis for the human resources system. The Secretariat is undertaking a skills inventory of the entire staff in order to maximize the use of those skills. Any career development programme must include comprehensive proposals for all levels and categories of staff, including General Service and related categories.

69. In 1985, the Organization undertook a major classification exercise for all posts in the General Service and related categories. Classification of posts was then established as a continuous procedure to be implemented whenever functions of posts were significantly changed. In the absence of proper controls, however, individual reclassifications have distorted career paths in many occupational groups. There is a definite need for the Office of Human Resources Management to undertake a comprehensive review, in cooperation with departments, of the career paths and levels of posts in each occupation as a prelude to establishment of a comprehensive career development system.

70. Over the past two-year reporting period, two particular aspects of the promotion system have been suggested for streamlining. Such streamlining would have serious negative consequences for the due process rights of staff. In the current promotion process, all candidates who are eligible for promotion (collaterals) are reviewed to determine whether they have the qualifications for promotion to vacant posts in their area. All candidates also have the right to know whether or not they have been recommended for promotion by their department. Once a candidate has been informed that he or she has not been recommended, that candidate has 10 days to provide any additional information that the reviewing body may not have which might influence its decision. The administration has proposed the abolition of both of these procedures — collateral review and pre-review letters — in order to simplify the process. However, this is one case where simplification of a process impinges on the rights of staff.

71. Programme managers currently design the vacancy notices, set the criteria required, make the recommendation for the individual to fill the post and appear before the Appointment and Promotion bodies to defend their recommendations. Should the Appointment and Promotion bodies recommend a candidate other than the department's choice, aside from the department's right to appeal the recommendation directly to the Secretary-General, departments have also demanded that the Appointment and Promotion bodies again review their recommendations.

72. In the entire process described above, candidates who were not recommended had three opportunities to present their candidature — at the time of initial application, during the collateral review process and through the pre-review letters. Without the latter two procedures, staff members will have only one formal opportunity to plead their case at the

very start of the process. Changes to the placement and promotion system must be reviewed carefully to ensure that the due process rights of staff are respected. It would be appreciated if the General Assembly would reinforce the right of staff to the opportunity to present their qualifications on equal footing with recommended candidates if the promotion system is to be seen as fair and transparent.

73. The G-to-P examination, as a major career development programme for staff, and for women in particular, in the General Service and related categories, is also causing serious concern. The staff in the General Service and related categories must serve a minimum of five years with the Organization and must have appropriate academic qualifications prior to being convoked to take the examination. The average successful candidate has served for approximately 10 years or more with the United Nations and has a wealth of knowledge and experience about the Organization and its mandates. There is also sufficient overlap of functions at the senior General Service level with the entry Professional level that most successful staff have already been performing junior professional work for some time.

74. Yet, from its inception, departments have been opposed to the competitive examination because department heads do not have control over the candidates who would be successful. Therefore, many departments resist providing posts for the examination. Several restructurings of the Organization have also led to a situation where there are fewer junior professional posts than ever before. For that reason, only 17 staff members, on average, have been promoted through the G-to-P exam each year over the last seven years. The actual number of posts has been in decline each year for the last few years. And, in the past year, programme managers in the statistical and the public information areas have openly requested the use of alternative measures to recruit junior professional staff in an attempt to circumvent both the national and G-to-P examination process.

75. The constant deterioration of the examination process — identification of fewer posts for hundreds of candidates, refusal of departments to provide junior posts for the examination, continuous upgrading of eligibility requirements creating more difficulty each year for staff to apply and the negative attitude of department heads who do not give successful G-to-P candidates fair consideration and evaluation has led to resentment and demoralization for staff in the General Service and related categories.

76. The Secretary-General, in his reform plan, spoke of transforming the United Nations into a centre for continuous learning. The staff of the General Service and related categories already exemplify this concept. Many staff have advanced university level degrees and are continuing their studies on their own time and at their own expense. A cursory look at the examination process reveals that the costs of maintaining the process far outweigh the benefits. For example, in the case of the national competitive examinations, it would appear to be a more rational solution if posts subject to geographical distribution could undergo regular recruitment with the understanding that managers would have to choose from a pool of candidates who are nationals of underrepresented countries only. In addition, General Service staff with appropriate educational qualifications could go through the ranks normally. Many staff still believe that the solution is to establish a unified personnel structure. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), last year, established unified nomenclature, thereby eliminating one major barrier to a unified structure. At that time, the former Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and the President of the Staff Union requested the Secretary-General to consider a similar step at the United Nations.

77. In paragraphs 10 and 11 of section III.B of its resolution 51/226, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take effective measures to prevent the placement of staff members against higher-level unencumbered posts for periods longer than three months,

to issue vacancy announcements within a three-month period and to instruct all programme managers to inform the Office of Human Resources Management of all vacancies immediately and of all foreseen vacancies six months before the posts become vacant. This continues to be a problem, particularly at the senior levels. Staff representatives have raised a number of cases where individuals have remained on posts for which they do not qualify and where the posts have not been advertised. There appears to be a need for closer monitoring by the General Assembly of the mandates in its resolutions.

XII. Linguistic goals in the context of the Performance Appraisal System and the recruitment and promotion policy

78. Staff representatives are happy to see the dedication of the Secretary-General protecting the multicultural spirit of the United Nations and ensuring that multilingualism is a priority in that spirit. It is an asset for the Organization to have international staff who are conversant in more than one language. The Organization provides excellent language training and it is gratifying to know that so many staff avail themselves of this opportunity.

79. The majority of staff are already working long hours owing to the recent reduction in posts. Twelve-hour days are now common for most staff of the Secretariat. Therefore, it is important that supervisors be encouraged to facilitate the attendance of staff at language courses during the day.

80. While the General Assembly and the Secretary-General agree on protecting, improving and giving recognition to multiculturalism and linguistic proficiency, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) has proposed withdrawal of the reward for such qualifications. In today's global environment, language skills are not only used in the performance of immediate work, but also in daily work-related communications. Continued reward for language proficiency must remain as an incentive to staff and a resource for facilitating many aspects of the Organization's work.

XIII. Efforts to achieve the level of 70 per cent of permanent appointments in posts subject to geographical distribution

81. In paragraph 19 of section III.B of resolution 51/226, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to offer probationary appointments to all staff members who have passed a competitive recruitment examination and to consider all such staff members for conversion to permanent appointment after completion of the period of probationary service. In the Secretary-General's report on Human Resources Management (A/53/342, para. 77), it is suggested that "the right thus conferred on this group of staff to be considered for permanent appointment at the end of their probationary service works against an expeditious reduction to the 70 per cent level of permanent appointments set by the General Assembly".

82. The staff representatives believe that the General Assembly acted wisely and fairly by ensuring that the legal obligation of the Organization entailed in the contracts of those staff recruited by competitive examination was given precedence over the achievement of the 70 per cent level of permanent appointments in posts subject to geographical distribution.

83. Aside from the fact that the morale of these staff has been lifted significantly, this action has obviated the need for lengthy legal challenges in the internal justice system owing

to the violation of contractual rights. Such cases would require an enormous time commitment and would also entail financial implications.

XIV. Use of consultants

84. The staff representatives note the efforts of the Secretary-General to develop guidelines for the use of consultants, individual contractors and institutional contractors. The staff representatives believe that the use of consultants should be minimized in view of the fact that there are staff members who would be eager to pursue new types of training to acquire special skills for which consultancy funds are now being utilized.

85. However, the staff representatives realize that there may be instances when a short-term project requires specialized skills that would not be needed on a continuing basis. In such cases, training staff in new skills might not be warranted. However, it is imperative that the credentials, qualifications and experience of the suggested consultant be fully verified. It is equally imperative that consultants not receive any additional training at the expense of the Organization. The staff representatives are gratified to see the confirmation that consultants should already possess the necessary skills to accomplish their goals and they should not have any representation or supervisory responsibility.

86. The intention of the Secretary-General to make all efforts to ensure a geographical balance when utilizing the services of consultants is also noted. In his report on the comprehensive guidelines for the use of consultants in the Secretariat (A/53/385), the Secretary-General reported that wide geographical balance may not be possible in all cases due to the costs involved for travel. The staff representatives feel that the benefits of retaining the internationalism of the system may well be worth the expenditure of extra funds to retain well-known world experts.

87. It is also mentioned in the Secretary-General's report that consultants would be limited to a 24-month contract within a 36-month period. The staff representatives believe that this is more of a long-term commitment than would warrant the use of consultants. If a commitment of two years is required, it would be more realistic and economical to train a staff member in the specialized field, whenever possible.

XV. Internal vacancies

88. In his report on internal vacancies in the Secretariat (A/53/327), the Secretary-General recommends several ways to deal with a judgement of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal (No. 852, Balogun (1997)), on the filling of internal vacancies. The Administrative Tribunal has indicated that staff under any type of contract, who are in the service of the Organization have the right to apply for internal vacancies. As part of his argument against such a system, the Secretary-General mentions that this ruling would allow staff in the General Service and related categories to apply for P-3 posts without taking a competitive examination.

89. The Secretary-General is trying to create a system of rewards and continuous learning in the United Nations. For those who invest their own time and financial resources to ensure their continued academic and technical training, it is important that they have the opportunity to fully avail themselves of the Secretary-General's vision. In a system of competitive promotion where only 17 individuals, on average, are promoted to the Professional category from the General Service and related categories, it is obvious that there is little current

reward in the United Nations for continuous learning. As already noted in the present report, eligibility requirements are continually increasing over time, creating a situation where senior, experienced staff are becoming less eligible for promotion to higher levels.

90. When taking decisions on this matter, it should be remembered that applications for internal vacancies still undergo a competitive process and actual acceptance in a vacant post is subject to adherence to the criteria established for the particular post. This criteria includes, among other things, educational requirements, experience in the occupational field and linguistic ability. Individuals who meet all of the qualifications for a post at the P-3 level, provided they are regular 100-series staff, should have the opportunity for fair consideration, in accordance with the Staff Rules and Regulations.

XVI. Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat

91. The report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/53/376) presents successful initiatives on improvement of professional women in the United Nations Secretariat. The staff representatives applaud the efforts of the Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Focal Point for Women, who have succeeded in reversing negative trends and moving towards the goal of gender parity.

92. It is unfortunate that little progress has been made in improving the status of women in the General Service and related categories in the United Nations. Success in this area is usually reported according to the number of successful women in the G-to-P examination, which recent statistics indicate are 61 per cent of successful G-to-P candidates. However, the focus for improving the status of women in this category should not only be promotion to the Professional category. Women serving in General Service occupations are entitled to have careers and promotions within the category. This is an issue that continues to be overlooked and which requires immediate study.

93. The overwhelming majority of secretaries in the Organization are women who wage a continuing battle against stereotypical attitudes that stand in the way of proper recognition of their profession for the value and diversity of the work they perform. These negative attitudes have further translated into a lack of advancement or opportunities for diversified career experience which are afforded other occupational groups — even within the General Service category itself. The Secretary-General should ensure that women in the General Service are fully represented in all occupations, statistics, accounting, computing, travel clerks, etc., and not limited to secretarial roles. If women are to move into the new millennium as a viable force in the United Nations, efforts will have to be made to include special measures for the career development of the General Service and related categories.

94. There are a number of peripheral issues that are important to all staff but of particular relevance to women. It is critically important, if the Organization is to attract and retain highly qualified women, that the requirements for child care facilities be carefully reviewed. Despite scarce resources, financing of on-site child care centres for every duty station, expansion of the existing facilities in New York and subsidies for lower paid staff are investments that will yield a triple-fold return. All studies indicate that the resultant rise in productivity and staff morale is tremendous and that the benefits far outweigh the expenditure. Flex-time, part-time work and telecommuting are also particularly important to women, since they are the primary caregivers, not only for children, but also for spouses and secondary dependants in the family. All efforts must be made to fully develop these

types of progressive programmes and to ensure that programme managers are flexible in their application to allow the widest possible participation.

XVII. Harassment, including sexual harassment

95. A problem that continues to exist in the Secretariat is the harassment of staff. Too many staff are subjected to verbal abuse on a daily basis. There have even been isolated cases of physical abuse in recent years. The culture of privilege has allowed senior staff of the United Nations to abuse their authority in an unrestrained manner. Many staff, owing to their unsteady contractual status, are not inclined to challenge their supervisors for fear of further recrimination.

96. This fact was highlighted at the Secretary-General's open meeting with staff on reform, which was held at Headquarters on 29 October 1998. During the question-and-answer period, the staff-at-large responded with thunderous applause when a staff member informed the Secretary-General that staff could not openly criticize or bring their recommendations about reform because those on fixed-term contracts feared reprisals from their supervisors.

97. The Secretary-General has developed a number of policies and guidelines for dealing with sexual harassment in the United Nations. These guidelines are completely supported by the staff representatives. However, when individuals have attempted to initiate cases based on these administrative instructions, delays in reviewing the case have been as long as one year. Once charges of sexual harassment have been made in an office setting, it creates a very awkward and adversarial atmosphere for all of the individuals in the office. It is incumbent upon the Organization to deal with these cases as quickly as possible and to ensure that both the complainant and the accused have access to a focal point to receive information on the case. The staff representatives suggest using the network of focal points for women to ensure that individuals involved in such cases are kept fully abreast of all actions being taken.

XVIII. Internal system of justice

98. At the twenty-second session of SMCC, it was agreed that the review and revitalization of the justice system was an integral part of the reform of the Organization. In order to achieve that goal, the establishment of a joint staff-management working group on the internal justice system was recommended.

99. Panels of counsel continue to generate concern among the staff representatives and the staff-at-large. Many duty stations do not have panels and staff have no local access to legal advice when they initiate appeals in the justice system. The present volunteer advocacy is not given nearly enough support to perform its functions. There is a need to attract additional members and to provide intensive training to ensure that those members have the knowledge, skills and competence to properly defend the rights of staff.

100. Bearing in mind the importance of counsel in cases of appeal, it was recommended by SMCC to explore establishing and/or revitalizing panels of counsel at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters as a priority by each local staff-management machinery, which should ensure that all applicable rules were applied.

101. Reduction of posts has increased the workload of staff to the point where many of the best members can no longer devote time to the functions of counsel. The right to competent counsel is all the more important in the United Nations justice system owing to the restriction

that staff may utilize only serving or retired staff members as counsel and the recommendations of JAB are closely reviewed to ensure their adherence with established legal principles.

102. Throughout the review of the justice system, it must be remembered that justice delayed is justice denied. Every attempt must be made to deal quickly and efficiently with requests for review and appeals. It should not take a year or more to bring a case to its conclusion. Such delays take their toll on the financing of the system and on the emotional stability of the parties involved.

103. One way to make the justice system more expeditious is to facilitate earlier resolution of disputes. At its forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions, the General Assembly considered a proposal by the Secretary-General to establish ombudsman panels under the guidance and director of a coordinator at a high level. Although there was widespread support for this concept in the Assembly, no further action was taken by the administration to implement this proposal. When the Working Group on the Internal System of Justice is convened in early 1999, it is hoped that an agreement can be reached to implement this proposal.

XIX. Effects of devaluation on pension benefits

104. When the rules and regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund were formulated at its inception, it was never contemplated or foreseen that the acquired rights or benefits for individuals could diminish or deteriorate the longer a staff member serves the Organization.

105. Evidently, this is exactly what is happening to the pension benefits of staff serving at duty stations away from Headquarters as a direct result of the devaluation of local currencies. Over the past several years, the retirement benefits under article 28 of the rules have decreased, in some cases by more than 50 per cent over their previous values. The net effect of this phenomenon on the staff who are retiring now or will retire in the future is devastating in the extreme.

106. It is our very strong belief that it was never the intention or design of the Pension Fund that the longer staff dedicated their lives to serving the United Nations the more they stood to lose their pension benefits. We, therefore, sincerely believe and urge that remedial and special measures should be established to correct the past losses and protect the further erosion of future benefits.

XX. Office of Internal Oversight Services

107. One of the visible examples of delegated authority is the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The Under-Secretary-General for Management recently confirmed that this office is accountable to the Secretary-General. There have been a number of concerns expressed by career staff in OIOS that the personnel rules in relation to career staff are not being observed. As an example, staff members have reported that the performance appraisal system is not being properly observed and career staff should be reviewed by the United Nations Appointment and Promotion bodies rather than a special promotion body established independently by OIOS.

108. The investigative process and the release of information to the press have also provoked concern among the staff representatives. Staff have reported being "interrogated" for up to four hours on two continuous days. Recently, details of a case currently under

consideration by JDC was reported on *Reuters* around the world and attributed to the head of OIOS. Those same details were reported to the General Assembly in a report.

109. Staff representatives want to ensure that staff are treated as innocent until proven guilty. Therefore, it is important for the General Assembly to ensure the proper controls with respect to the due process rights of staff. In order to assess how delegation of authority works in reality, the Assembly might wish to consider an audit of the personnel situation in OIOS.

XXI. Conclusion

110. The staff representatives of the United Nations Secretariat submit these comments and views in the hope of making a constructive contribution to the consideration of human resources questions and to the vital work of the United Nations in today's world.

Annex I

Accountability vis-à-vis parameters/objectives

METHOD	TOOLS	RESULTS Achievement of objectives (substantive, HRM)	CONSEQUENCES	MEANS OF IMPLEMEN-TATION
MONITORING FOLLOW-UP	A. Existing -PAS -evaluation Performance indicators (Managerial competencies) -External oversight -Staff/ Management consultations -JAB, UNAT, Panel on D&G, JDC -Rebuttals B. New -client satisfaction (attitude surveys) 360 degrees -Team Reviews (at different levels) - Succession planning	-ratings -Reports -yardsticks for achievement -Audit and Evaluation - Joint bodies reports -Reports - Statistical Study Feedback Feedback Reports Overall Identified action or inaction	RECOGNITION a) incentives: i)Non monetary -opportunity to acquire new skills -staff development ii)Monetary Bonus/awards [a] b)Selection opportunities, career advancement c)Fast tracking [a] CORRECTIVE MEASURES -coaching/ counselling -training -reassignment SANCTIONS -Reprimand -financial accountability -Removal from functions -Reassignment -dismissal	RECOGNITION PAS/MRC/Head Dept. Apt/Prom. Process CORRECTIVE MEASURES Head of Dept. OHRM APB/APC OLA: Advice on outcome of appeals SANCTIONS -Investigation -Chapter X Mechanisms

[a] Not yet in place.

Annex II

Discussion points for the Task Force on Human Resources Management

United Nations Staff Union

I. Essential participation of the staff

1. The Secretary-General's reform was developed by his advisers at the highest level without any participation from the staff. Staff were asked to participate, but could not meet the terms that were set, namely, strict confidentiality in terms of the proceedings of the working group on reform. However, the Secretary-General gave a commitment that staff would participate in the implementation phase of reform.

2. The staff representatives requested but were denied participation in this main task force. Staff representatives participate in the working groups but feel that is inadequate. They would like to have a voice in the group that will recommend policy changes. The staff unions are statutory bodies established by the General Assembly and, as such, are mandated to represent staff interest.

3. Participation of staff should be at the global level. The United Nations has changed and is becoming more aware of the duty stations away from Headquarters all over the world. Staff representatives feel that it is unrealistic to effect meaningful and lasting reform without their input and comments. Their concerns are very different from those serving at Headquarters.

4. The staff has a global forum, the Staff-Management Coordination Committee (SMCC), which meets annually to discuss global staff-management issues. The next meeting will take place in May 1998. It was decided last year that this forum would be used to discuss reform since it has an impact on the global Secretariat.

5. It would be helpful if the Task Force could meet with SMCC, or at least, the reports prepared thus far could be reviewed in detail at that meeting.

II. History of the human resources mechanisms

6. It is very difficult for staff to accept outsiders who criticize the existing mechanisms without taking the time to understand why they were developed. It must be remembered that the Charter of the United Nations, which was written more than 50 years ago, remains a valid document for today's Secretariat. There is no other place like the United Nations representing all of the countries of the world. This does not mean that some of the principles of the private and public sectors are not adaptable for use in the Organization. However, the special character of the United Nations must be taken into account when making that adaptation.

III. Need for clear and correct information

7. If the staff is to take ownership of the reform process, then the management, in particular the Office of Human Resources Management, must allow staff to take part in the process. Staff is not fully informed about the actions that are being taken. There should be an information campaign conducted by information specialists to ensure that staff's questions are answered and that information on the ongoing reform processes is regularly made available.

IV. Areas where we have experienced difficulties

8. Staff representatives have had difficulties in the following areas:

(a) Succession planning sounds too much like a pre-selection of candidates without a fair review of skills and abilities;

(b) Application of the performance appraisal system has created a super-class of staff members (A's and B's — who are on a fast track for development ahead of other staff who are competently performing their jobs);

(c) The promotion system gives an unfair advantage to managers in developing job descriptions, requiring special skills that only certain individuals may possess, and consequently presenting their chosen candidates in a better light than other candidates who are equally qualified;

(d) In the area of recruitment, governmental influence and cronyism lead to the recruitment of unqualified staff who then become the responsibility of the Staff Union and contribute to the characterization of United Nations staff as "deadwood";

(e) Grades are not always properly and fairly assigned upon recruitment;

(f) Upon recruitment, staff are placed in one department without any understanding of how to achieve mobility and, therefore, remain in one department for their entire career;

(g) A recent example of delegation of authority for recruitment has revealed some unsettling results. In the department in question, 70 per cent of the recruited staff are from the national Government of the head of department. Staff do not trust that managers will be fair in such matters;

(h) For a multicultural organization, there is a basic lack of understanding of world cultures;

(i) There is also a lack of respect for cultures of developing countries. Their economic systems and industries may not be highly developed, but this does not mean that all aspects of the policies that pertain to their human resources policies are useless;

(j) Career development. This has been non-existent for many years. Staff are not waiting for a perfect system, but they would be happy to contribute to their own career support and development.

V. Morale problems

9. Staff are, naturally, demoralized by the constant downsizing and restructuring. It is important to know how other Governments and companies have dealt with this problem effectively and whether there are any special measures that could be taken to alleviate the stress on staff.

10. The fact that there is a freeze on conversion to career appointments has also served to demoralize staff. The staff believe that this issue should be closely examined by the Task Force with a view to informing the General Assembly about this important issue.

VI. Role of General Service staff in reform

11. The United Nations has two very distinct classes of staff. The General Service staff, who perform all of the support work for programmes, have not been included in any aspect of the reform process. In particular, the restructuring of human resources processes may have decided impacts on these staff and may also create opportunities for new challenging work. General Service staff should be more specifically included.

VII. Concepts versus concrete action

12. The staff has heard the buzz words that go hand in hand with the reform process, however, they are looking for small but concrete signs of change. Such signs would lend continued support to the reform process.

13. There is also concern that the concepts are all too western and that the reform is being rejected as an attempt to "Americanize" the United Nations.

VIII. Internal justice system

14. The critical element in the private sector that guarantees strict compliance with rules is the fact that failure to respect rules can result in costly litigation for the company and consequences for the programme manager involved. In the United Nations, there are no such consequences and it is obvious that the justice system has played a secondary role since there is no working group even addressing reform in this area.

15. It is essential that the justice system be strengthened and streamlined at the same time as the human resources management system and that managers be held accountable for the decisions that they make, particularly in cases of repeat offences.

Annex III

Statement of Principles on International Security of Staff adopted at the Summit on International Security on 25 February 1998

The security of staff is the responsibility of the Member States. Article 105 of the Charter of the United Nations states that "the Organization shall enjoy in the territory of each of its Members such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the fulfilment of its purposes".

Similarly, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies provide a framework for United Nations staff to conduct their work without fear of reprisals or threats to their safety, freedom and life.

Furthermore, the International Court of Justice specifically addressed the case of international civil servants injured in the course of duty. According to the court "(to) ensure the independence of the agent, and consequently the independent action of the Organization itself, it is essential that in performing his duties he need not have to rely on any other protection than that of the Organization ...".

Owing to the ever increasing dimension of peacekeeping operations, which are diversified and encompass a variety of elements from complex emergencies to humanitarian aspects, it is important that these protections be extended to associated personnel.

In order to effectively carry out the mandates of the United Nations, it is essential that the staff be seen as independent from the influence of any Member State, to be given the means to exert this independence and to advance only the principles and ideals of the Organization.

The participants at the Summit, therefore, decide to recommend to the Secretary-General the following proposals:

1. Appropriate financial, physical, logistical, and psychosocial support for United Nations staff serving in the field.

2. Personal call by the Secretary-General for the ratification of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel in order to place more emphasis on the enforcement of international laws and basic human rights.

3. Appropriate action to ensure consistently and equally the safety and security of all staff, whether internationally or locally recruited, in accordance with the existing security plan.

4. Coordination of activities in the field, through the inter-agency body assigned central responsibility.

5. Security training and medical preparations for all staff at all duty stations prior to their departure to the field, with special emphasis on those recruited specifically for mission.

6. Adequate information on local political and social situations to those going to the field.

7. De-briefing and stress-management counselling after field assignment for the benefit of the individual staff member and to detail "lessons learned" to improve procedures and provide greater preventive support.

8. Strong support for the proposal of the Security Coordinator and the Coordinating Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) to establish mobile training teams for mission areas.

9. Provision by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator of easier access to basic information on casualties and detained staff and to include an appropriate section on this subject in the United Nations home-page on the Internet.

10. Publication of an abridged *Field Security Handbook* and its distribution to every staff member.

11. Adoption by each organization of a policy ensuring that contracts of staff members are renewed appropriately and that their contracts remain in force throughout the entire period of mission service, from point of entry to point of departure.

12. Obligation of the Secretary-General to ensure the respect of the basic human rights of all staff. Consequently appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the provision of necessary medical, legal and humanitarian assistance to detained staff as well as assistance to their families for the duration of the detention.

13. Firm application, vis-à-vis national Governments, of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations to all United Nations system staff, including locally recruited staff who are nationals of the host country.

14. Setting-up by the Administrative Consultative Committee (ACC) of a technological working group to establish a common United Nations technological standard for emergency communications equipment and inter-agency protocol.

15. Re-examination of the feasibility of providing United Nations identity documents for all locally recruited staff members, whether nationals or non-nationals of the host country.

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Views of the staff representatives of the United Nations Secretariat

Note by the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Annex III

Paragraph 8, second sentence

For Coordinating Committee on Administrative Questions *read* Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions

Paragraph 14

For Administrative Consultative Committee *read* Administrative Committee on Coordination

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